

Podcast Transcript for “A Physician Talks About the Treatment for Gypsy Moth”

Interviewer (AW): Adrian Woodfork, Public Information Officer, CDFA

Guest (CJ): Dr. Carrie Jones, medical public health physician, Pesticide and Environmental Toxicology Branch,
Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, Cal/EPA

AW: “Thank you for tuning in to the California Department of Agriculture’s Agricast. I’m Adrian Woodfork, Public Information Officer for CDFA’s Plant Health Services Division. My guest is Dr. Carrie Jones, from the Environmental Protection Agency’s Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. Dr. Jones will answer questions pertaining to the Btk eradication treatment of the highly destructive, invasive pest known as the gypsy moth. Dr. Jones, do you consider Btk safe for the treatment of gypsy moth?”

CJ: “The Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment has monitored the plant spraying of DiPel, which is the Btk product. And we found that it’s very low-risk to humans. And that’s both the ingredients, the Bacillus itself and also the other ingredients in the product.”

AW: “Do you feel there is misinformation about the effects of Btk?”

CJ: “I think there may be some misinformation out there about Btk. This particular product is very specific to moths. It will be toxic to caterpillars after they eat the product. There is a protein crystal that harms their digestive system, and then they stop eating and die. But it’s not harmful to anything other than moths. So, it’s not harmful to humans. The product is tested to make sure there are no human toxins in it. And if any of the product is poisonous to humans, it wouldn’t be used.”

AW: “Dr. Jones, tell me about precautions during the application.”

CJ: “People who think they might be sensitive to products—anything in DiPel, including the Btk or the other ingredients—you would want to stay indoors; keep your windows and doors closed while the product is being sprayed on the leaves, the trees on your property; you would want to make sure to stay away from the area that’s sprayed for maybe four hours while the spray is allowed to dry. Those are the main precautions you would want to take.”

AW: “And what about the precautions written on the label?”

CJ: “There are precautions that people want to take when they use any sort of product. And so even though this product is low risk, people are asked to stay away from the area when things are being sprayed, to flush their eyes with water if any of the spray got in their eyes, which would be very unlikely for

somebody whose property is being sprayed. And those are safety precautions that would apply to any number of products and doesn't indicate that the product has any special risks - it is a low-risk product."

AW: "Thanks, Dr. Jones, for a very informative interview and thank you for tuning in to the CDFA Agricast. If you have any questions or comments for us, please do not hesitate to e-mail us at the officeofpublicaffairs@cdfa.ca.gov. That's the officeofpublicaffairs@cdfa.ca.gov."